

STARS AND STRIPES

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

U.S. releases photos of dead sons

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The U.S. military released graphic after-death photographs Thursday in an effort to prove to Iraqis that Saddam Hussein's feared sons, Odai and Qusai, were killed in a fierce gunbattle this week.

Two U.S.-military photos showed the first man, identified as Qusai, with bruises and blood spots around his eyes. That face was far more intact than the other, identified as Odai; the mouth was open and the teeth showing.

The face of what appeared to be Odai, the older brother, was severely bloodied. A gash ran from his left eye to the right corner of his mouth, and bruises and blood over his bald forehead.

Washington had hoped that the deaths of Odai and Qusai would weaken the anti-American insurgency, but an attack on a convoy Thursday killed three Americans from the division that led the assault on Saddam's sons' hideout.

L. Paul Bremer, the U.S. administrator of Iraq, told a Pentagon news conference Thursday that the deaths of Saddam's sons "will in fact in time help reduce the security threat to our forces."

Some Iraqis greeted the release of the photographs with skepticism, saying they were not conclusive proof that the sons were killed. Others said they were convincing.

President Bush hailed the deaths of Saddam's sons.

"The careers of the two of the regime's ... henchmen came to an end," Bush said Thursday. "Now more than ever, the Iraqis can know that the former regime is gone and is not coming back."

The photos showed the upper torsos of the men, who were bare-chested — one lying on bloody, white sheets, the other in what appeared to be a body bag. Both had their eyes closed, the lids darkly purpled.

The brothers had never worn such thick beards, and may have been trying to dis-



AP

In a Baghdad barbershop Thursday, Iraqis see televised images of the faces of Saddam Hussein's dead sons. The pictures appeared on an international news channel.

guise their identities as they spent 3½ months in hiding from coalition forces.

The pictures were immediately broadcast to the Arab world including Iraq by two Arab satellite television networks, Al-Jazeera and Al-Arabiya.

Abbas Fadhil, a 44-year-old barbershop owner, said he

had no doubts after seeing the pictures on Iraqi TV that the photographs were of the brothers, but was confused by the U.S. decision not to show the bodies in full.

But Alla Khalifa, 32, a barber in the shop, said he doubted the pictures of Odai were authentic because he appeared to be slightly overweight.

V Corps homecoming still up in the air

BY SANDRA JONTZ

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — One day after announcing plans to cover the next two years of deployments to Iraq, Army officials Thursday still were tweaking those schedules and scrambling to update divisional officials.

On Wednesday, Gen. John Keane, the Army's acting chief of staff, listed the plans for several Army divisions, but failed to make any mention of when V Corps soldiers might be coming home.

On Thursday, Army staffers from Washington to Germany couldn't answer any time-line questions about Germany-based V Corps troops, referring media questions across the ocean between public affairs officials in the States and overseas.

Until the moment Keane stood behind the lectern Wednesday for a press briefing on the Iraq rotations, staffers were making last-minute changes to briefing slides.

And some of the divisions tapped to replace deployed troops were caught off guard by Keane's announcement.

Soldiers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade out of Vicenza, Italy, attached to the Army's 4th Infantry Division operating in northern Iraq, are scheduled to leave Iraq in April. One public affairs officer with the 173rd learned of the brigade's redeployment plans from Stars and Stripes instead of the Army.

And, shortly after Keane said the 82nd Airborne Division had been tapped to relieve exhausted soldiers from the 3rd Infantry Division in September, phone lines at the

Army's top public affairs office at the Pentagon lit up — with calls from 82nd Airborne staffers looking for information, said public affairs officials both in North Carolina and at the Pentagon.

While details still are being hashed out, officials said they are telling soldiers, their families and the press that, as a general rule, soldiers can expect to return home a year after they arrive in country, said Maj. Martha Brooks, an Army spokeswoman.

The Associated Press contributed to this report. E-mail Sandra Jontz at: jontzs@stripes.osd.mil

Security upped at N.Y. City Hall

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Mayor Michael Bloomberg walked through a metal detector as he returned to City Hall on Thursday, a day after an aspiring politician bypassed one of the machines and fatally shot City Councilman James Davis.

"We have a city to run ... the same city that Councilman Davis was trying to help. And the rest of us have a responsibility to his family and to 8 million people to continue," Bloomberg told reporters.

The Wednesday afternoon attack turned New York City's seat of government into a violent crime scene, with screaming political aides and terrified visitors diving for cover. A police officer on the chamber floor fired shots at the gunman in a balcony, killing him.

Davis, 41, of Brooklyn, a former police officer and ordained minister who campaigned against urban vio-

lence, was struck several times and died at a nearby hospital. He had planned to introduce legislation on workplace violence that afternoon.

Othniel Askew, 31, who had been escorted into City Hall by the councilman before killing him, died at the same hospital. For a time before emergency workers arrived, the two fatally wounded men were lying side by side in the balcony.

Bloomberg, yards away, was startled at his desk when the gunfire erupted shortly after 2 p.m. Wednesday but was unharmed.

Askew had filed papers to oppose Davis in a three-way council race in this fall's Democratic primary, Bloomberg said. But he was not an official candidate because he had not filed enough petition signatures.

Councilman Kendall Stewart said Davis had cut a deal

with Askew so Askew would not run against him in November.

But three hours before the shooting, a man identifying himself as Askew called the FBI's New York office and said Davis was harassing him over the upcoming primary, FBI spokesman Joe Valiquette said.

Davis spokeswoman Amyre Loomis said it had appeared in recent weeks that the men had struck a truce.

On Thursday, Jennifer Stephens, a spokeswoman for the Air Force, confirmed that Askew had at one time served in the military.

However, she did not know when or in what branch of the armed forces he served.

The shooting raised new security questions at City Hall, a two-century-old stately landmark positioned near the southern tip of Manhattan, no more than a five-minute walk from the World Trade Center site.

Memphis begins cleanup

The Associated Press

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Traffic lights were out all over town.

Fallen trees littered city streets. And the death toll from this week's powerful storm that raked through Memphis continued to rise.

The storm, which hit early Tuesday, was blamed on a fourth death Wednesday. Residents were still picking up from damage caused by 100-mph winds and utility crews from surrounding counties arrived to help restore power.

Gov. Phil Bredesen was scheduled to meet Thursday with city, state and federal emergency officials before he makes a possible request to President Bush for disaster area relief.

A man died when a tree fell on his house during the height of the storm, and a couple died in a fire late Tuesday night that authorities believe was caused by candles used to light their residence.

A 2-year-old boy died Wednesday of apparent carbon monoxide poisoning after three adults and seven youngsters were overcome by fumes from a gas-operated generator at a Memphis residence, authorities said.

Authorities were assessing damage to homes and businesses, and initial estimates were about \$6 million in losses. Clint Buchanan, director of the county's emergency management agency, said several hundred homes and buildings were damaged.

The Beale Street entertainment district remained closed for a second day, threatened by a 500-foot-tall construction crane left leaning to one side by the storm.

With the electricity out, many stores and businesses were closed throughout town. The storm also left at least 32,000 homes and businesses without phone service.

Greater rules over ephedra sought

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Major League Baseball should not ban dietary supplements containing ephedra unless the government does, an official of the players' union testified Thursday to lawmakers looking into health problems related to the herbal stimulant.

The issue is particularly relevant to baseball because of the death in February of Baltimore Orioles pitcher Steve Bechler, who was taking a supplement with ephedra.

"The position of the players' association has long been that players should not be prohibited from using any substances that the United States government has effectively determined are not unsafe for consumption by other American consumers," said Eugene Orza, associate general counsel of the Major League Baseball Players Association.

Following Bechler's death, Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig banned players with minor league contracts from taking ephedra but did not prohibit major leaguers from using the stimulant.

Robert Manfred Jr., an executive vice president of Major League Baseball, explained Selig's decision, saying the players' union would not agree to ban any substance that could be purchased over the counter.

Other sports leagues do ban ephedra and

test players to make sure they are not using the product. They include the National Football League and Major League Soccer, both of which sent representatives to Thursday's hearing before the House panel.

Ephedra, which can be used to lose weight and boost athletic performance, has been linked to as many as 100 deaths. Health problems linked to the drug include strokes, heart attacks and seizures.

A 1994 law left dietary supplements largely unregulated. The Food and Drug Administration has said the statute prevents it from banning such products.

Scientists, health officials and the parents of two people who died after taking ephedra told the House panel Wednesday that the FDA should classify ephedra as a prescription drug, to be dispensed only when a doctor approves.

Manufacturers of ephedra insisted their products were safe.

"Ephedra supplements have been used by tens of millions of people in recent years," said Robert Chinery Jr., president of Nutraquest Inc., formerly Cytodyne Technologies Inc.

Bechler's parents, Ernie and Pat Bechler, and Kevin Riggins, whose 16-year-old son, Sean, died of a heart attack after taking ephedra, blamed the stimulant for the deaths.

Government, rebels battle for Liberia's port

BY ALEXANDRA ZAVIS

The Associated Press

MONROVIA, Liberia — Rebels and government forces battled with guns and grenades at Monrovia's strategic port Thursday, while West African leaders insisted they were speeding the first peacekeepers to stop fighting overrunning the refugee-crowded capital.

Despite the duels at the port and sporadic explosions and gunfire through the night, rebels said they were putting in place a cease-fire they have promised since Tuesday.

"It takes a couple days for the fighting to calm down," a rebel leader, Charles Benney, said by telephone.

"We don't want to take the country by force. We want to do it by negotiated settlement ... a military takeover isn't in anyone's interest," said Benney, member of a 3-year rebel campaign that has pushed President Charles Taylor into a last stronghold: Monrovia's besieged, densely populated downtown.

Fighting since Saturday has killed hundreds of civilians, leaving bodies lying in the streets and aid workers burying other corpses on the

city's Atlantic Ocean beaches. Battles have cut off the main supplies of water and food, with the port — crowded with warehouses holding foodstocks — across the front line in rebel hands.

With combat comparatively lighter Thursday, residents ran out in search of food — only to find markets, normally stocked with wares from the port, virtually empty.

Government commanders on the ground have spoken of a major government counter-offensive to retake the port ahead of the arrival of Nigerian peacekeepers, which

could freeze each side in their current positions.

Defense Minister Daniel Chea denied any such plans Thursday.

"No. We're only defending our lives and our people," Chea said by telephone from the port area, with sounds of battle raging in the background.

Of the promised deployment of peacekeepers, Chea said, "We've been waiting the arrival ... a long time now. When we see them, we will believe."

West African leaders on Wednesday announced they would send two Nigerian battalions to Liberia in days.

Deadly typhoon hits China

BY JOE McDONALD

The Associated Press

BELJING — A powerful typhoon plowed into China's southern coast Thursday after killing at least 10 people in the Philippines, injuring 11 in Hong Kong and forcing the daring sea rescue of 16 sailors who lost control of their ship.

Typhoon Imbudo had winds of up to 100 mph, the official Xinhua News Agency said. The Hong Kong Observatory said it was one of the strongest typhoons to hit southern China's Guangdong province in recent years.

Eleven fishing boats sank in the coastal city of Yangjiang and a fisherman was missing, said a city official who declined to give his name. He said 3,500 people had been evacuated, but there were no immediate reports of deaths.

The typhoon uprooted trees, flipped over cars and blacked out power in the city of Zhanjiang, state television reported. It said Imbudo was headed inland, moving northwest at about 15 mph.

Sharon, Abbas have much riding on Bush meetings

BY DAN PERRY

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Deadlocked over how to build on their truce that halted almost three years of fighting, Palestinian and Israeli prime ministers are headed to Washington for a solution — with each leader hoping for hefty pressure on the other side to take the difficult steps first.

Expectations are particularly great on Palestinian Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas; officials say that the new leader, who is still weak among his people, must return with results or face possible ouster.

The unusual twin summits — President Bush meets Abbas on Friday and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon four days later — reflect the urgency felt by an administration that invested heavily in the "road map" peace plan.

Bush faces a huge challenge in resolving the tangle of disagreements over the plan, which is a blueprint for ending the violence that erupted in September 2000 and establish-

ing a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza by 2005.

Violence has been dramatically reduced since the main Palestinian militant groups declared a temporary halt to attacks on Israelis on June 29. Israel responded by halting most military activity and pulling troops out of parts of Gaza — restoring free movement in the strip — and the West Bank town of Bethlehem.

But progress is stuck, with Israel refusing to take further steps — especially troop pull-outs and a settlement freeze — until the Palestinians crack down on militant groups. Both sides want the other to take difficult steps first, although the road map calls for moves in parallel.

Sharon, he said, will ask Bush "to press ahead with getting the Palestinians to comply with the road map, especially dismantling and disarming terror organizations."

Palestinians have the opposite view — that Israel must first commit to timetables for freezing settlements, withdrawing troops and freeing prisoners.

Santa's summer

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — About 120 Santa Clauses from around the world, clad in different shades of red, gathered Wednesday for

their 40th annual convention.

Santa Claus, St. Nick, Sinter Klaas, Pere Noel, Babba Natale, Julenissen and others from Europe, the Americas and Asia met in an amusement park north of Copen-

hagen for the three-day World Santa Claus Congress.

The agenda for the face-tious convention included a vote on when Christmas should be held this year.

From wire reports

Sprewell traded in 4-team deal

BY DAVE CAMPBELL

The Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — Latrell Sprewell, Keith Van Horn and Glenn Robinson highlighted a four-team, six-player trade that was completed after a day of negotiations.

Sprewell went from New York to Minnesota, which sent injured point guard Terrell Brandon to Atlanta and backup center Marc Jackson to Philadelphia. The Sixers dealt Van Horn to the Knicks and received Robinson from the Hawks. The Sixers also sent reserve Randy Holcomb and a first-round draft pick to Atlanta and reacquired their own 2006 second-round pick from the Hawks.

The four-team trade was finally consummated Wednesday night after a day of negotiations that Minnesota vice president Kevin McHale said

were complicated when a fifth team, which he would not name, tried to get involved.

The process accelerated when that team dropped out Wednesday evening.

"I've found out one thing, that five general managers can't make a cake, but four can," McHale said.

With dozens of teams trying to cut back on payroll this offseason, McHale convinced owner Glen Taylor that the time was right to make significant changes.

"Glen said, 'Let's make this team the best it can be,'" McHale said. "This was the time to strike."

With the addition of Sprewell, an athletic defender who fills a hole at shooting guard, the Timberwolves can boast a talented starting lineup with Troy Hudson or Sam Cassell (acquired in trade

last month with Milwaukee) at point guard, Wally Szczerbiak at small forward, Kevin Garnett at power forward and recently signed free agent Michael Olowokandi at center.

"You can't keep building and building — at some point you have to make a run," said McHale, whose team has been eliminated in the opening round of the playoffs an NBA-record seven times in a row.

"The future is now."

The deal ends Sprewell's five-season tenure with the Knicks, which included a trip to the 1999 finals but ended acrimoniously after the four-time All-Star arrived for training camp last fall with a broken hand — an injury he failed to notify the Knicks about.

The Knicks were attracted to Van Horn because of his size.

Armstrong holds on to Tour de France lead

The Associated Press

BORDEAUX, France — Lance Armstrong finished 28th in the flat 17th stage of the Tour de France on Thursday, maintaining his overall lead and saving his strength for a crucial upcoming time trial.

Servais Knaben won the 112-mile stage in 3 hours, 54 minutes, 23 seconds.

Armstrong's plan on Thursday was to stay safe. He accomplished that goal and was led to the line by his U.S. Postal Service teammates.

Armstrong, trying for a record-tying fifth straight Tour win, finished in a group of riders that included Jan Ullrich, his closest rival.

By finishing with the same time as Ullrich, Armstrong preserved his 67-second lead over the 29-year-old German with just three days of racing remaining.

The flat stage from Dax to Bordeaux, the wine capital of southwestern France, offered few chances for Armstrong to extend his lead or Ullrich to make up time.

The racers were content to hang back while a group of 10 riders, including Knaben, broke away in the first kilometer.

Both Armstrong and Ullrich are fixing their attention on Saturday's individual time trial, when they will race against the clock.

Ullrich, the 1997 Tour champion, is hoping for a repeat of his crushing defeat of Armstrong in a time trial last Friday, when he trimmed 96 seconds off Armstrong's overall lead and set the stage for a close final week of racing.

Kobe's team versed in high-profile cases

The Associated Press

DENVER — Kobe Bryant's legal dream team consists of two low-profile attorneys with a client list ranging from Jon Benet Ramsey's father to retired Avalanche goalie Patrick Roy and writer Hunter S. Thompson.

One of them, Pamela Mackey, knows the prosecutor well and the other, Hal Haddon, ran former Sen. Gary Hart's 1988 presidential campaign.

Colleagues say they are well-respected across Colorado for a meticulous work ethic, and could prove a formidable obstacle for prosecutors

trying to convict the Los Angeles Lakers superstar of sexually assaulting a 19-year-old woman.

"Nobody has a better success ratio," longtime Denver criminal defense attorney Robert McAllister said. "They'll leave no stone unturned. No avenue not driven down."

The 24-year-old Bryant is free on bail and is set to appear in court Aug. 6. He is charged with sexually assaulting the woman June 30 in his suite at the Lodge & Spa at the Cordillera in Edwards, about 100 miles west of Denver. Bryant says the sex was consensual.

His attorneys have shied away from the media, refusing interviews with the exception of two brief news conferences.

During the prosecutor's news conference detailing the charge last week, Bryant released a statement saying he had committed adultery. His wife, Vanessa, issued her own statement, saying she would stand by her husband.

Two hours later, the couple joined their attorneys at a nationally televised news conference from Staples Center, where the Lakers play. There, Bryant declared his innocence and tearfully apologized to his wife.

Brazil beats U.S. 2-1 in soccer

MIAMI — The United States was three or four minutes from beating Brazil for only the second time.

But then the Brazilians eliminated the defending champions from the CONCACAF

Gold Cup, tying the game in the 89th minute and beating the Americans 2-1 Wednesday night on Diego's penalty kick in the 10th minute of overtime.

"You can't give up a goal with two minutes to go," U.S. forward Landon Donovan said.

From wire reports